



# Mason in Motion



## Inside this issue:

Robbery Prevention Tips 1

Ed Smith Officer of the Year Recipient 2

Street Smart Pedestrian Campaign 3

New Technology 4

Notable Arrest 5

Crime Solvers Information 6

Station Contact Info. Events Calendar Mason Station Staff 7

## FAIRFAX COUNTY CRIME SOLVERS

**CALLERS MAY  
REMAIN  
ANONYMOUS**  
TOLL FREE  
1-866-411-TIPS

CRIMESOLVERS  
@ FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV



## Robbery Prevention

During 2007 the Mason District Station experienced a 22.5 percent increase in street robberies. There were 27 more reported cases in 2007 when compared to 2006. This represents 147 in 2007 compared to 120 in 2006. The men and women of the Mason District Station are committed to reducing crime by arresting individuals who commit these robberies, reducing the number of crimes and educating the public on prevention.

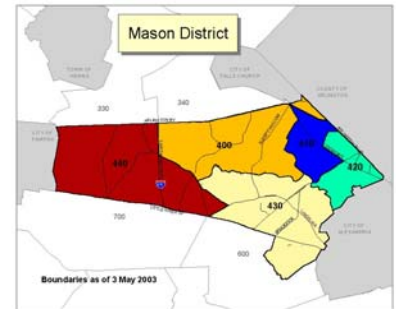
The police department seeks your help in combating these crimes in the neighborhoods and shopping centers. Together we can make a difference and apprehend these criminals. In 2007 the men and women of the Mason District Station arrested 45 people who were charged with robbery. A zero tolerance towards these crimes of violence will continue to be the officers' commitment as they vigorously investigate these cases.

Your involvement as a community member is crucial and an integral part of our collective zero tolerance approach to crime, particularly crimes of violence. We ask that you immediately report any suspicious activities or acts of violence. Your call is important to us and begins the "zero tolerance" approach. Call 911 for crimes in progress or 703-691-2131 for non emergency situations. You may always call anonymously to Crime Solvers at 1-866-411-TIPS/8477 or email [crimesolvers@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:crimesolvers@fairfaxcounty.gov).

Protect yourself from becoming a victim by practicing some of these prevention tips:

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Be attentive and follow your instincts.
- Do not sacrifice safety for convenience.
- Avoid walking alone when possible; there is safety in numbers.
- Walk on well-lit, well traveled streets or areas.
- Have a cellular phone with you for emergencies.
- Immediately report crimes or suspicious activities. \*



**SERVICE AREA SUPERVISORS****AREA 400****Lt. Mihelarakis****Steven.Mihelarakis@Fairfaxcounty.gov****Sgt. MacDonald****Andrew.MacDonald@Fairfaxcounty.gov****AREA 410****Lt. Reed****Gervais.Reed@Fairfaxcounty.gov****Sgt. Krause****James.Krause@Fairfaxcounty.gov****AREA 420****Lt. Holmes****Kevin.Holmes@Fairfaxcounty.gov****Sgt. Kuhar****David.Kuhar@Fairfaxcounty.gov****AREA 430****Lt. Ipinia****Edgar.Ipinia@Fairfaxcounty.gov****Sgt. Manzo****Ronald.Manzo@Fairfaxcounty.gov****AREA 440****Lt. Volles****Scott.Volles@Fairfaxcounty.gov****Sgt. Williams****Albert.Williams@Fairfaxcounty.gov**

## Ed Smith Officer of the Year is Awarded

On March 4, 2008 Officer Justin Lascola received the Ed Smith Officer of the Year award for 2007 at the monthly Citizens' Advisory Council (CAC) meeting. Officer Lascola works the evening shift and was nominated by his supervisor, Lt Gervais Reed.

Officer Lascola joined the Fairfax County Police Department in August 2004. Upon graduating from the Police Academy he was assigned to the Mason District Station where he has worked as a patrol officer. His assigned police service area (PSA) is the Baileys Crossroads, Skyline and Build America Shopping Center area. This area includes extremely diverse establishments; from high rise apartment buildings to shopping centers to a homeless shelter. It is also home to a diversity of residents from different countries, cultures, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds. Officer Lascola works tirelessly to educate himself on the traditions and customs of different cultures so he is able to make a distinction between suspicious behavior and cultural traditions.

During his time at the Mason District Station he has developed many informants who have provided valuable information that he has shared with local and federal law enforcement. These tips have aided on-going investigations and inevitably led to arrests. Officer Lascola has also made numerous narcotics arrests, to include cocaine, marijuana and khat, a plant native to East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. It contains cathinone, an amphetamine-like stimulant, which causes excitement and euphoria when consumed. Investigating a khat case is unique, since it is not commonly found in this area. Due to this, officers and Commonwealth Attorney's were unsure how to proceed. Officer Lascola researched khat and provided pertinent information that led to a felony conviction, rather than the misdemeanor it might have been without his research.



**Officer Justin Lascola**



### ***Traffic Laws You May Not Know***

#### **46.2-833.1 - Evasion of traffic control devices**

It shall be unlawful for the driver of any motor vehicle to drive off the roadway and onto or across any public or private property in order to evade a stop sign, yield sign, traffic light or other traffic control device.

#### **46.2-845 - Limitations on U-turns**

The driver of a vehicle within cities, towns or business districts of counties shall not turn his vehicle so as to proceed in the opposite direction except at an intersection.

No vehicle shall be turned so as to proceed in the opposite direction on any curve, or on the approach to or near the crest of a grade, where the vehicle cannot be seen by the driver of any other vehicle approaching from any direction within 500 feet.



## **Street Smart Pedestrian Safety Campaign**

The Mason District Station was recently the sight of two extremely serious pedestrian accidents in one week, one that resulted in a death and the other with very serious injury. The first was on Wednesday, March 12, just before 7am. Marta Saavedra, 60, was crossing Columbia Pike, not in a crosswalk, when she was struck by a vehicle driven by a 26-year-old Alexandria man traveling west on Columbia Pike.

The second incident occurred on Thursday, March 13 at around 10a.m., on Rt. 50 in front of Loehmanns Plaza. A woman in her early 20's was crossing Rt. 50 outside a crosswalk when she was struck by a vehicle. She was transported to INOVA Fairfax Hospital with serious injuries and is expected to survive.

These two incidents illustrate the importance of pedestrian safety and education. With pedestrian fatalities on the rise, leaders from the District, Maryland and Virginia launched the *Street Smart* pedestrian safety campaign on Friday, March 7, 2008. Kicking off the effort on the busy Route 7 corridor in Fairfax County, the regional effort combines stepped-up law enforcement targeted to areas with high numbers of pedestrian-related incidents and public awareness efforts to promote safer behavior behind the wheel and at the curb.

Galvanized by heightened concern about pedestrian safety, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) will host a Traffic Safety Workshop at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, April 29. The goal of this workshop is to gather policy makers and working professionals from around the region to address the causes of pedestrian deaths and injuries, and come to collaborative solutions.

Across the region, police departments will be conducting waves of increased pedestrian safety enforcement this spring, including Fairfax County police officers stepping up enforcement along Route 7, Route 1 and other corridors that experience a high incidence of pedestrian crashes.

"This campaign concentrates on raising public awareness of dangerous behaviors, while educating drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians on how they can be safer on the roads in the Washington region," said Mason District Supervisor Penny Gross. "Ensuring pedestrian safety is every person's responsibility."



## New Technology at Mason Station

In January, the Mason Station received two Mobile Automated Fingerprint Identification System Unit (AFIS). This remote hand-held device allows officers in the field to compare a person's fingerprints and/or photograph against those in the AFIS database. These databases contain fingerprints and photographs of people who have been arrested in Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia. Other counties such as Montgomery and Prince George's will have their information on line by this summer. When someone is arrested, their fingerprints and photographs are stored in a system that police officers can access for investigative purposes.

This device has been used several times by patrol officers to determine the true identity and criminal background of someone they are talking to. Once someone's picture and fingerprints have been put into the mobile system, the officer waits for a return. The return will provide the name, date of birth of the person whose fingerprints or photographs were entered. Photographs taken in the field are compared to approximately one million photos in various database systems to determine the identity of the subject. This kind of technology facilitates instant, reliable data where it's most needed, in the streets. Fairfax County Police continuously evaluate technologies in keeping with our mission of public safety.

Currently, three officers from the Mason District station have been trained to use this system. These officers will train others so eventually all patrol officers and detectives at the station will be skilled in this new technology. The Mason Station's goal is to continuously have the Mobile AFIS Units in the street and use them as often as possible for investigative purposes.

This device works in conjunction with Nextel phone systems. Nextel approached the Fairfax County Police Department and requested our participation in testing this new system. As of now, Fairfax County is the only department using facial recognition and biometrics technology in a single device in the country.



**Mobile Afis Unit**

## Notable arrest:

### Police Impersonator Arrested After Stopping Off-duty Fairfax County Police Officer



Police arrested Steven Rivas, 19, of 7801 Ridgewood Drive in Annandale around 1 a.m. Saturday, January 5 after he pulled over an off-duty Fairfax County Police officer on her way home from work. Rivas was parked in a lot next to Woodburn Elementary School in a 2004 gold Ford Explorer when he pulled onto Gallows Road and followed the officer. He activated blue lights, signaling for the officer to stop on the northbound ramp to I-495.

After Rivas allegedly identified himself as an undercover police officer, the authentic officer identified herself and asked to see his badge and credentials. Rivas returned to his car and pulled away, with blue and white lights still activated.

The real officer got the license plate number and provided it to the Fairfax County Department of Public Safety Communications. Officers then responded to the Annandale home where Rivas was subsequently arrested. He was transported to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center and charged with impersonating a police officer, reckless driving, use of unauthorized lights and abduction.

While incidents of police impersonation are not commonplace, citizens should always use care when stopped by police. In situations where drivers are truly concerned that the approaching vehicle may not be a valid police officer, take the following steps:

- ⇒ Activate your vehicle's emergency flashers.
- ⇒ Drive carefully and immediately to the nearest well-lit, populated area for the driver's, as well as the officer's, safety.
- ⇒ Ask for the officer's official identification, if questionable.
- ⇒ Dial 9-1-1 if necessary. Give your precise location and ask the call taker to verify the traffic stop.

As a result of this arrest Officer S. P. Ruck was awarded Officer of the Month for the Month of February by the Citizens' Advisory Council.



## Fairfax County Crime Solvers Takes a New Byte Out of Crime!

With the recent creation of their new website, Fairfax County Crime Solvers has tapped into the latest technology available for receiving anonymous tips. Tipsters may now give their information via texting or e-mail using state-of-the-art software purchased through Anderson Software. Texting is a popular form of communication for the younger generation and Fairfax County Crime Solvers hopes to open that line of communication with them.

Previously, tipsters were limited to calling a phone number. This new software opens the door for Crime Solver programs and interfaces these newer forms of communication with tip-taking. It enables tipsters to communicate through a secure server that blocks their identity. Thus, tipsters are able to relay vital information from anywhere they can send text or e-mail messages and at any time.

In addition, their new website provides current information on wanted persons, news releases, suspects caught in the act and upcoming events. This site is continually updated. It was designed with the user in mind and provides a means to stay current with the latest efforts of the Crime Solvers Board.

Fairfax County Crime Solvers is the first in the Washington Metropolitan region to implement this new texting and e-mail software. Other programs in the nation that currently use it have seen a sharp increase in the number of tips received.

Fairfax County Crime Solvers is a non-profit 501C3 organization comprised of business leaders and citizens throughout the area. They provide a venue for those with knowledge of a criminal act to report information without the fear of retaliation. Their tip lines are protected under law.

The Fairfax County Crime Solvers' Board of Directors invites you to visit their new website at [www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org](http://www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org) Those who wish to report information may now utilize one of the three methods available:

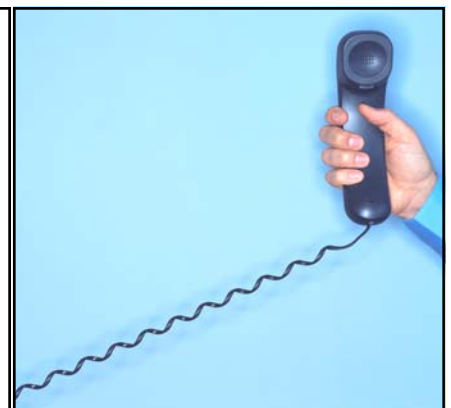
- **By phone** – Call 1-866-411-TIPS/8477 and follow the voice prompts to Fairfax County
  - **By e-mail** – visit [www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org](http://www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org) and click on the secure link to communicate back and forth.
- By texting** – Text "TIP187" plus your message to CRIMES/274637



### Fairfax County Community Crime Statistics Information Line

**703 – 246 – 7932**

This phone number can be used to request crime statistics for any neighborhood within Fairfax County. Callers will be asked to leave full contact information, requests will be filled within 5-7 business days and limited to two (2) requests per week.



**FAIRFAX COUNTY  
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Mason District Station  
6507 Columbia Pike  
Annandale, VA 22003

Phone: 703-256-8035

Email:

Christopher.Conner@Fairfaxcounty.gov  
Courtney.Thibault@Fairfaxcounty.gov  
Mary.Nugent@Fairfaxcounty.gov  
Jessica.Beaty@Fairfaxcounty.gov

**Crime Prevention Unit  
703-354-5889**



A Fairfax County, Va., Publication

**Fairfax County Government  
12000 Government Center Pkwy  
Fairfax, Virginia 22030**

**Mason Station  
Events**

**CAC**

**Next meeting**

**April 1, 2008**

**&**

**May 6, 2008**

**Neighborhood Watch**

**Coordinators**

**Neighborhood Watch**

**Training**

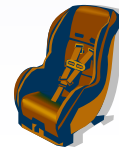
**April 1, 2008**

**Child Safety Seat Installations**

**Various dates throughout the  
county.**

**Please call the hotline for more  
details.**

**703-280-0559**



**WE'RE ON THE WEB!  
[WWW.FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV](http://WWW.FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV)**



*Join us every first  
Tuesday of the month for  
the CAC Meeting held in  
the **Large Conference  
Room** at the Mason  
District Station.*

**The Cast of the Mason District Station**

**Station Commander**

*Captain Michael Dittmer*

**Assistant Commander**

*Lieutenant Rich Perez*

**Crime Prevention Unit**

*MPO Chip Conner*

*PFC Courtney Thibault*

*APO Mary Nugent*

**Community Policing Support**

*CA Jessica Beaty, Crime Analyst*